

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for suppressing proliferation of abnormal prion proteins, comprising ~~the step of~~ systemically, orally, intracerebrally or intraspinally administering to a patient in need thereof an essential amino acid having a branched side chain.

2. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is selected from the group consisting of leucine, isoleucine, valine, and ~~a mixture~~ mixtures thereof.

3. (Currently amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ method ~~for suppressing proliferation of abnormal prion proteins, comprising the step of systemically, orally, intracerebrally or intraspinally administering~~ according to claim 2, wherein said amino acid having a branched side chain is leucine.

4. (Currently amended) A method for ~~administering~~ providing an essential amino acid having a branched side chain to a patient in need thereof, comprising ~~the step of~~ systemically, orally, intracerebrally or intraspinally

~~administration~~ administering said essential amino acid having a branched side chain so as to suppress proliferation of abnormal prion proteins.

5. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 4, wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is selected from the group consisting of leucine, isoleucine, valine, and ~~a mixture~~ mixtures thereof.

6. (Currently amended) The ~~[[A]] method for administering leucine,~~
~~comprising the step of systemically, orally, intracerebrally or intraspinally~~
~~administering~~ according to claim 4, wherein said essential amino acid having a
branched side chain is leucine so as to suppress proliferation of abnormal prion
proteins.

7. (Original) A suppressive agent containing an essential amino acid having a branched side chain as an active ingredient for suppressing proliferation of abnormal prion proteins.

8. (Currently amended) The suppressive agent according to claim 7, wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is selected from the group consisting of leucine, isoleucine, valine, and ~~a mixture~~ mixtures thereof.

9. (Currently amended) The suppressive A-suppressing agent for suppressing proliferation of abnormal prion proteins, the agent containing according to claim 8, wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is leucine as an active ingredient.

10-12 cancelled

13. (Currently amended) A method for preventing prion diseases by suppressing proliferation of abnormal prion proteins which comprises ~~the step of~~ systemically, orally, intracerebrally or intraspinally administering to a patient in need thereof an essential amino acid having a branched side chain as an active ingredient.

14. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 13, wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is selected from the group consisting of leucine, isoleucine, valine, and ~~a mixture~~ mixtures thereof.

15. (original) The method according to claim 13, wherein the essential amino acid having a branched side chain is leucine.

16. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 13, wherein said prion ~~diseases~~ disease is scrapie.

17. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 13, wherein said prion ~~diseases~~ disease is bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

18. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 13, wherein said prion ~~diseases~~ disease is Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD).

19. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 13, wherein said prion ~~diseases~~ disease is Gerstmann-Straussler-Scheinker syndrome.